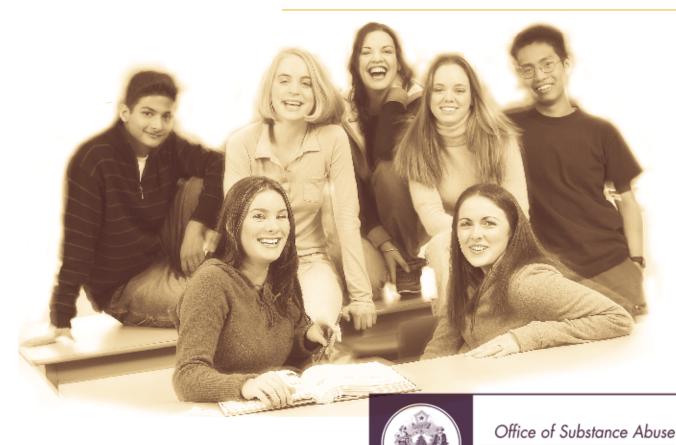
Your Teen & Alcohol

a Resource Guide for Maine Parents

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Department of Health and Human Services



Your Teen & Alcohol

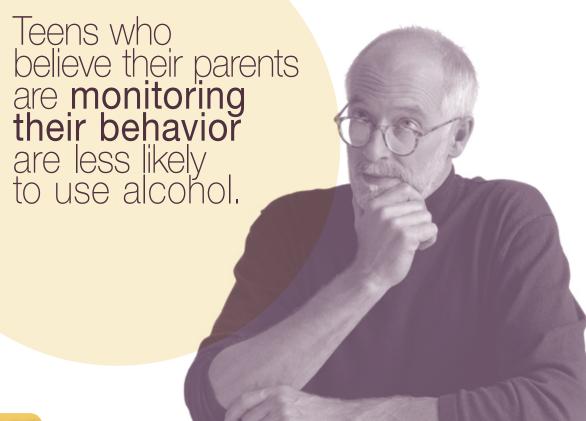
a Resource Guide for Maine Parents

Parents play a very important role in preventing underage drinking. This booklet of useful facts, practical tips, and valuable statewide resources was created to help you guide your child through adolescence to healthy adulthood. We know that teens who understand the dangerous effects of alcohol are less likely to drink. We also know that teens who believe their parents are monitoring their behavior are less likely to use alcohol.

A Resource For Every Maine Parent

This resource is designed to support you. As your child grows, there may be times that some information is more important than others. Keep this information handy to help guide your young person through the ever-changing years of adolescence.

In addition to this Resource Guide, there are many other people and places to turn to for more information and help with particular questions or issues.



www.MaineParents.net

Community Resources

Coalitions and community organizations across Maine are good resources for parents. Many want to partner with parents to prevent underage drinking. Contacts for some local coalitions can be found on the web at: www.maineosa.org/prevention/communitycontacts.htm or by calling or emailing the Office of Substance Abuse Information and Resource Center (IRC).

Healthy Maine Partnerships work throughout the state to improve the quality of life for all Maine people by addressing health risks and issues within the community, including substance abuse. To find the Healthy Maine Partnership in your area, visit http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/hmp/ or call the IRC.

There are **people in every community** who are good resources for parents looking for assistance in dealing effectively with underage drinking issues. These people include:

- · School principal or assistant principal
- Guidance counselor, social worker, or substance abuse counselor at the high school
- School resource officer (available in many school districts—can be contacted either through the police department or the high school in communities where they exist)
- Other law enforcement officers, including the local police chief or sheriff
- Pediatricians, family physicians, physician assistants, or family nurse practitioners who provide health care services to teens

Maine Office of Substance Abuse Information and Resource Center

The Information and Resource Center (IRC) offers many materials about substance abuse at no cost. They also provide information on suicide prevention. Books, literature, and pamphlets are distributed free and videos are available to organizations and community groups.

In addition, the IRC maintains listings of treatment facilities and support group meetings in Maine. **Staff is available** to assist you with requests for information, referrals to services, and other questions related to substance abuse issues.

Contact us: 1-800-499-0027 (in-state only) or 207-287-8900 • TTY: 1-800-606-0215

Email: osa.ircosa@maine.gov

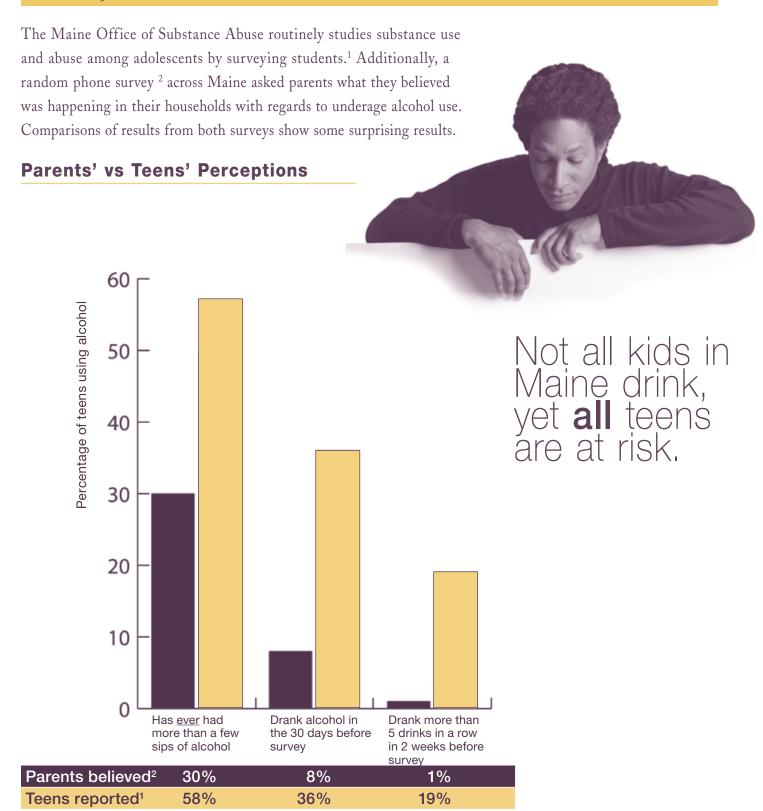
www.maineosa.org/irc • Fax: 207-287-8910

For more information, visit www.MaineParents.net



Maine Data

What you should know about teen alcohol use in our state

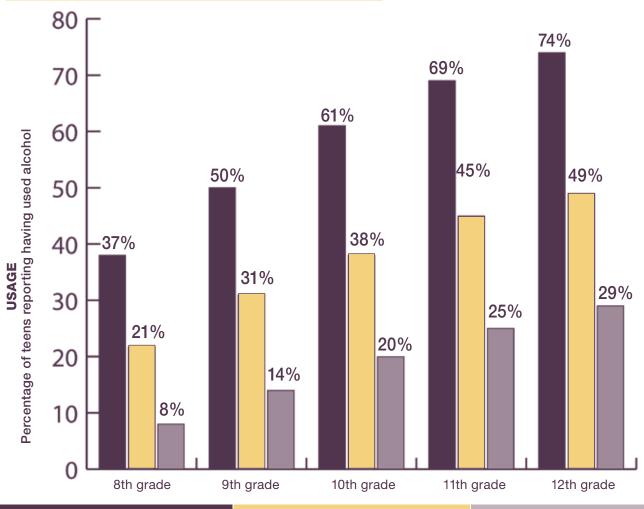


What Maine parents believe is <u>not</u> what Maine teens say!

Not all kids in Maine drink, yet all teens are at risk. A recent statewide survey reported that 58% of Maine students in grades eight through 12 have tried alcohol. In addition, 36% of the teens said they drank within one month of when they took the survey, and 19% reported binge drinking (five or more alcoholic beverages in a row) within two weeks of the survey. The numbers rise dramatically in higher grades.

More importantly, most teens don't believe their parents would find out if they were drinking. According to the survey results, they're probably right. 70% of Maine parents don't believe their teen has ever tried alcohol; they believe it's somebody else's kid. Nearly one-half of them are wrong. The question you have to ask yourself is, "do I really know?"

Teens report their own alcohol use¹



Lifetime:

Students reporting any use of alcohol (more than just a few sips on at least one occasion)

30 Day:

Students reporting use of alcohol on at least one occasion in the past 30 days

Binge:

Students reporting having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row within two weeks of when they took the survey.



Perception versus Fact

Teens mistakenly perceive that their peers are drinking more than they really are.

Parents often perceive that they would know if their teen was using or abusing alcohol. Whatever your perceptions are, it is helpful to know the facts.

What Parents Believe

Parents Believe:

It's someone else's kid.

THE FACT:

Most parents underestimate the extent to which their teen is at risk. Only 30% of the parents surveyed believed their child has ever had a drink.² If you assume that it's someone else's kid who is drinking, ask yourself the question, "do you really know?" Monitor your teen's behavior, talk to them about the negative impact of alcohol on their lives.

Parents Believe:

My teen is honest with me. THE FACT:

Not always. Most parents surveyed (93% of moms, 93% of dads²) felt that their teens shared their thoughts with them. But when it comes to getting the straight scoop, many kids report it differently. Only 50% of the teens agreed that they share their thoughts and feelings with their fathers, 62% with their mothers⁵. Keep talking and dig deeper. Encourage conversation; ask questions that require more than just yes or no answers.

Parents Believe:

I would *know* if they used alcohol.

THE FACT:

83% of Maine parents believe they would know:² only 44% of the teens surveyed agreed.¹ **Trust but verify**; talk to your teens before they go out and when they return home.



What **Teens** Think

Teens Think:

Everyone in my school drinks.

THE FACT:

While 36% of Maine students (grades 8-12) reported having had a drink in the last 30 days, they are in the minority. Encourage your teen to question their assumptions and help them realize that everyone else isn't drinking.

Teens Think:

It doesn't matter, I'll be 21 soon. THE FACT:

It does matter. Kids who drink before they turn 15 are four times more likely to develop a dependency to alcohol than those who wait until they are 21 to try alcohol. Research also shows that 40% of kids who begin drinking before age 15 are likely to develop an alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.³ That proportion drops to below 10% for those who begin drinking after age 21. Alcohol affects teens and adults differently. It'S WOrth the Wait.





Alcohol won't hurt me.

THE FACT:

Alcohol hurts kids. In addition to drunk driving, alcohol is a major factor in many other types of fatal injuries including drownings, burns, falls, and alcohol poisoning from drinking too much, too fast. It makes young people MOre SUSCEPTIBLE to sexual assault and unprotected sex.



Alcohol & Your Teen's Health

Adolescent brain development

As your teen grows and matures, their bodies go through many changes. Just as important are the changes that take place in their brain. One of the most important times for brain development is

between the ages of ten and twenty. Research shows the brain is not fully matured until the mid-twenties. And not all parts of the brain mature at the same time. The difference in how parts of the brain grow can cause a teen to make reckless decisions or actions, ignore consequences, and act on emotions that put them at risk. Your teen may not be able to make a good decision in certain situations. One of those situations can involve whether or not to use alcohol. Continued adult guidance remains important during adolescence when all of this

Alcohol use affects how teen brains develop

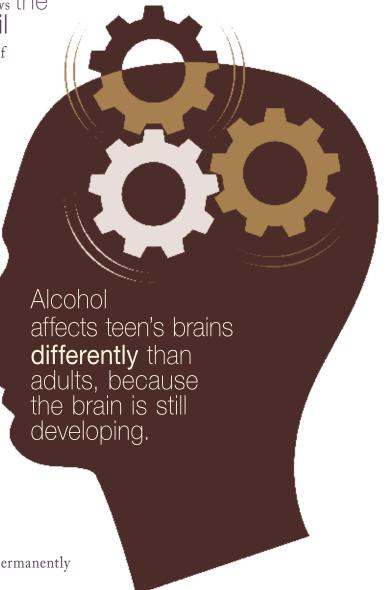
is occurring.

Studies show that alcohol affects teens differently than adults. Teens are at a greater risk of negative results from drinking alcohol.

New studies show that alcohol use may cause long-term damage to a teen's brain. It sometimes permanently affects how portions of the brain develop. Even one alcoholic drink

develop. Even **one** alcoholic drink can reduce brain function in teens.

Teen alcohol use can affect how a teen learns and uses information and also lower their verbal and motor skills.



By delaying use of alcohol, you can greatly improve your teen's chances of leading a healthier, happier life now and in the future.

Alcohol dependence

Many parents don't realize how serious the results of teen alcohol use can be. Kids who drink alcohol before they turn 15 are four times more likely to develop a dependency to alcohol than those who wait until they are 21.

Research also shows that 40% of kids who begin drinking before age 15 are likely to develop alcohol dependence at some point in their lives. Waiting until age 21 lowers that risk by 70%. Each year a teen delays drinking alcohol lowers the odds of

By delaying use of alcohol, you can greatly improve your teen's chances of leading a healthier, happier life now and in the future.

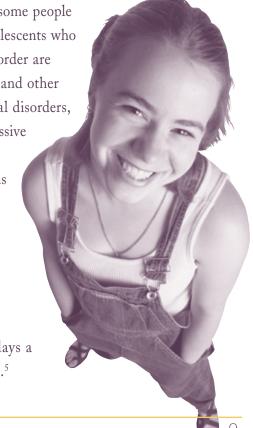
future alcohol dependence by 14%, and alcohol abuse by 8%.3

Emotional and psychological effects

Kids move from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, and high school to college or the workplace, moving in and out of different peer groups and expectations that expose them to new stresses and new stressful situations. Research shows a link between stress and alcohol consumption. The physical effects of growing, which include hormonal changes that affect a teen's mood and behavior, may contribute to an increased consumption of alcohol during adolescence. During this time of dramatic change, your teen will benefit from extra support to avoid alcohol use.⁴

Depression and anxiety are risk factors for alcohol problems because some people use drinking to cope. Adolescents who have a defined mental disorder are more likely to use alcohol and other drugs. Treatment of mental disorders, such as depression or excessive anxiety is very important before an adolescent begins to drink and equally important after they start drinking.⁴

Alcohol impairs judgment and has been strongly linked to teenage depression and plays a significant role in suicide.⁵



Unintentional injury and death

Alcohol is a powerful drug that slows down the body and the mind.

It reduces coordination, slows reaction times and interferes with judgment. Alcohol plays a major role in teenage injuries and fatalities. Alcohol related traffic crashes are the leading cause of death and disability among teenagers but alcohol is harmful to your child in ways beyond drinking and driving. There are several social and health consequences which make underage drinking a serious public health problem.

Underage drinking contributes to:

- Risky sexual behavior and unintended pregnancies⁶
- Sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs and STIs) such as genital herpes and AIDS⁶
- Academic failure and dropping out of school⁷
- Criminal behavior perpetrating rape, assault, robbery, murder and other violent crimes⁸
 - Becoming the victim of rape, assault, robbery, murder and other violent crimes⁸

Alcohol & Your Teen's Health

Other physical effects of alcohol

Studies have also shown that underage alcohol use has a negative impact on important body systems such as the endocrine system which releases the hormones that regulate growth and puberty.

Teen alcohol use can also affect a teens' bone growth and while, in later life, severe chronic disorders like cirrhosis, hepatitis, gastritis, and pancreatitis are associated with alcohol dependence, some teens who drink may develop early signs of liver damage.⁹

There are many excellent reasons for teens to not use alcohol and NO good reason for them to start. Positive, responsible role modeling by their parents and the adult community can help send the right message about not using alcohol. Messages and actions that reduce the impact of the alcohol industry support teens and help them to make healthy decisions.

There are many excellent reasons for teens to not use alcohol and there is NO good reason for them to start.

Tips for Monitoring Your Teen

5 ways to reduce your teen's risk:

1 Limit Access

Start Here

>>>

Then Try > > >

Good: If you have alcohol in your home, keep track of it—know what and how much you have, and keep it where it is not accessible to teens.

Better: Thank store clerks when you see them card someone who is buying alcohol.

2 Network

Good: Get to know your teen's **friends.**

Better: Get to know the parents of your teen's friends. Know their rules so you don't have to just accept the argument "everybody else is allowed to..."

Reinforce and Enforce Rules

Good: Reinforce the rules and consequences of underage drinking before your teen goes out.

Better: Frequently explain the reasons behind the rules so your teen understands that rules are a protective measure, not just a restriction on their freedom.

Check in Often

Good: Before your teen goes out to a party or with friends, ask if adults will be present and if alcohol will be present.

Better: Ask your teen to call you from the party or gathering; if you have caller ID, you can ask them to use a landline, not a cell phone so that you can tell where they actually are when they call.

Be Up & Be Ready

Good: Wait up, or set the alarm for curfew time—talk with your teen about their night.

Better: When your teen arrives home, look for signs of use. Teens who believe their parents will catch them are less likely to drink.

Then Try >>> Examples

Best: Alert the police if you have information about where/how teens are getting alcohol in your community.

- Rather than stocking your refrigerator with beer and wine, buy just what you need for an occasion.
- Get into the habit of keeping your alcohol in a secure place or locking it up before your children become teens.
- Make your home an alcohol-free zone. It's an easy and cost-free way
 of preventing underage alcohol access.

Best: Let the parents of your teen's friends know your rules, and where you stand on underage alcohol use: no furnishing—ever.

- Ask about your child's friends: What interests do they share with your child? What is their family like? Do they have siblings?
- Ask for phone numbers and other ways to contact the parents of your teen's friends.
- Ask other parents what their rules are about underage drinking.
- Make sure the parents of your teen's friends know they can call you if they have concerns about your teen, and offer to return the favor.

Best: Enforce your rules consistently. Don't look the other way if your teen violates the rules—they need to know you're serious about the rules and that you will hold them accountable for violating them.

- Tell your teen what behavior you expect from them while they are out.
- Anticipate questions from your teen before discussing family rules.
 Be prepared with honest, firm answers.
- Decide, before a rule is broken, what would be a fair and appropriate consequence; then be sure to communicate that with your teen.

Best: Trust but Verify.

Check in with other parents about your teen's activities or drop by once in a while where your teen tells you they will be.

- Ask your teen for the address and phone number of the home they will be visiting.
- Be sure your teen knows how to reach you before they leave the house.
- Be aware of the use of cell phone text messages and instant messaging for planned drinking parties.
- Limit private access to the computer. Keep it in a living space you'll
 walk through while they are online.

Best: Prepare in advance for what you would do & say the FIRST time you discover that your teen has been drinking. Think ahead about how you want to react, who you would talk to, and how you would enforce the consequences.

- Keep the lights on and stay up until your teenager comes home.
- If their curfew is past your bedtime, ask them to wake you when they arrive and set an alarm for their curfew time.
- Hug your teen when they arrive home. Check for odors of alcohol.
- Make eye contact during conversation. Check for bloodshot eyes, slurred speech and sense of balance.



Are you sending mixed messages?

Modeling Behavior for your teen



Do you know what messages you are sending?

All teens are at risk for alcohol use—but there are simple things you can do to reduce your teen's risk. Be aware of the mixed messages you may be sending about drinking. Your kids learn from you!

Have you ever reached for a drink in front of your kids, saying "I had a tough day?"

This can make alcohol seem like a good way to relieve stress and something that you need to relax.

Do you tell drinking stories in front of kids?

Laughing about heavy drinking can make alcohol seem necessary to have fun.

Do you ever ask your kids to get a beer or other alcoholic drink for you?

This can make young kids feel comfortable handling alcohol.

Do you ever encourage your own friends to drink more in front of your kids?

This could make your kids think, "More drinks mean more fun!" and teaches them that peer pressure is okay.

Your kids learn from you!



Think of other subtle ways you may be sending mixed messages

Do you offer only alcoholic drinks when friends or family come to visit?

Do you think it's necessary to serve alcohol at all your parties and celebrations?

Do you wear t-shirts, baseball caps, etc. that advertise or promote drinking and/or specific brands of alcohol?

Do you see drinking as a "rite of passage" for teens that can't be avoided?



You must send clear messages with your actions.

Your actions can undo some of the lessons

you've been trying to teach your children about alcohol use. We all know our children are watching what we do and often mimic us. And teens challenge even the smallest inconsistency they see or hear from parents and other adults.

If you want your children to believe you and follow your guidance, then you must send clear messages with your actions. Actions and words that are consistent will support your rules about underage alcohol use and your message will have lasting benefits for your child.





It can be hard to see early signs of teen drinking¹⁰

Believe in your power to help your teen

Many parents think they would know if their child was drinking; but the signs of early experimenting with alcohol are hard to see. The signs may not be noticed if parents do not know what to look for. Sometimes parents think their teen is not like other teens and can resist peer pressure.

Unfortunately, the fact is that all teens are at risk

for use and abuse of alcohol.
As parents, it is important to know this risk and to always monitor your teen. By the time a parent sees physical and personality

changes, the teen is probably already heavily drinking alcohol and could be developing serious problems.

One sign that your teen may be thinking about (or already

experimenting with)

alcohol, could be a
casual mention that
one or more of their
friends is drinking.
Or, your teen may
tell you that one
of their friend's
parents lets their
teen drink. These

conversations could be your teen testing how you might react to their alcohol use. Other early signs could be inappropriate joking about friends' alcohol use.

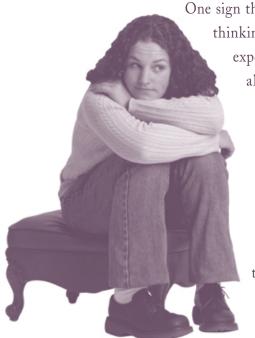
Some of the common warning signs of alcohol abuse are listed on the next page, but keep in mind that these signs may not be visible until the teen has

> been drinking for quite awhile. The best way to prevent underage alcohol use is to **Start early** to monitor your child and continue monitoring them during their teenage years.

Monitoring your teen can help you find out if they are using alcohol before there is a serious problem.

If you have a concern or think there may be a problem, talk with your child about your concern.

Believe in your power to help your teen, but don't be afraid to ask for help if you aren't sure what to say or do or if you need more information. If you think your teen may be having trouble, call your child's doctor for advice. They can direct you to a health care professional specializing in alcohol-related problems.



Watch for these **Signs** that may indicate a problem with substance abuse*

Some of the signs of alcohol abuse may seem like "normal" adolescent behavior. What is not "normal," however, is if your teen has more than a few of these signs. A combination of **changes** could indicate a serious problem.

Personality or Behavior Changes

- Abrupt changes in mood or attitude
- More irritable or argumentative
- Sudden decline in attendance or performance at school
- Rebelling against family rules
- Sudden resistance to discipline at school
- Uncharacteristic withdrawal from family or friends
- "Nothing matters" attitude; losing interest in school, sports or other activities that used to be important
- Physical, emotional, or mental problems
- Memory lapses
- Poor concentration
- Needs more money—or money is missing
- Heightened secrecy about actions or possessions
- Switching friends
- Associating with a new group of friends whom your teen refuses to discuss
- Finding alcohol in your child's room or belongings

Physical Changes

- Less appetite or continually hungry
- Loss or gain of weight
- Less interested in appearance
- Circles under eyes and pale skin, including face
- Bloodshot eyes
- Slurred or rapid speech
- Smell of alcohol on breath, or sudden, frequent use of breath mints

A combination of **several** of these changes could indicate a **serious** problem.

★ Please note that these could also be signs of depression, suicidal thoughts or other mental health issues for which your teen may need professional help.



Be Aware of Maine Alcohol Law

FOR TEENS

Illegal Possession^A

It is a civil violation* for any person under the age of 21 to possess liquor or imitation liquor except if it is within the scope of their employment or in their home in the presence of their parent. Fines for illegal possession are as follows:

1st Offense: \$200 to \$400;2nd Offense: \$300 to \$600; and3rd or Subsequent Offenses: \$600.

* Youths 17 years or younger are charged with the juvenile crime of illegal possession.

Illegal Transportation of Liquor^B

No person under the age of 21 shall transport alcoholic beverages in a motor vehicle except in the scope of their employment or at the request of their parent. The penalties for illegal transportation are:

- 1st Offense: 30 day license suspension and a fine of no more than \$500;
- 2nd Offense: 90 day license suspension and a fine of not less than \$200; and
- 3rd Offense: One year license suspension and a fine of not less than \$400.

Note: You cannot be charged for both possession and transportation for the same violation. Law enforcement must charge for transportation when a minor is caught driving with alcohol in the motor vehicle.

The Teen OUI Law (Zero Tolerance)^C

Any motor vehicle operator under the age of 21 who operates or attempts to operate a motor vehicle with any alcohol in their blood* shall have their license suspended by the Secretary of State for one year. If they have a passenger under the age of 21, an additional 180-day suspension will be imposed. Refusal to be tested will result in suspension of their operator's license for at least 18 months.

* Minors who test .08 percent or more will be prosecuted for the criminal offense of Operating Under the Influence, which results in even greater consequences.

FOR PARENTS/ADULTS

Furnishing Liquor or Imitation Liquor to a Minor^D

It is a criminal offense for any person, adult or minor, to furnish liquor or imitation liquor to a minor, to allow a minor under that person's control, or in any place under that person's control, to possess or consume liquor or imitation liquor. This offense may result in fines from \$500 to \$2,000 and/or a jail sentence for up to 12 months. If an injury or death occurs, the person responsible for furnishing the alcohol or the place to consume alcohol may be charged with a felony and could be sued under the Maine Liquor Liability Act.

Maine Liquor Liability Act^E

The Maine Liquor Act provides a way to pay for the cost of damages that result from alcohol related incidents. Anyone who sells, gives, or otherwise provides liquor to an individual, whether they hold a Maine Liquor License or not, can be sued for negligent or reckless conduct under this law.

Negligent conduct is defined as serving liquor to someone you know is a minor or intoxicated as defined by law.

Reckless conduct is the intentional serving of liquor to a minor or a visibly intoxicated person when the server knows and consciously disregards an obvious and substantial risk that serving liquor to that person will cause physical harm to the drinker or to others.

Financial Implications

Repayment may be awarded for property damage, bodily injury, or death caused by the consumption of liquor served by the defendant. The limit on awards is \$250,000 plus limitless medical expenses.

If you are sued as a result of providing alcohol to a minor or visibly intoxicated person, which is a violation of the law, your homeowner's insurance will not protect you.

Allowing minors other than your own children to drink alcohol in your home (even if you do not supply the alcohol) is a criminal offense, which may result in fines or even jail sentencing.

Footnotes

Source: www.maineparents.net/maine_laws.html

Adapted from Quick Guide to Maine Liquor & Liability Laws. Bureau of Highway Safety's website

http://maine.gov/dps/bhs/impaired-driving/guide.html

A Maine Law Title: 28-A Section 2051-E

B Maine Law Title: 28-A Section 2052-1

^C Title 29-A Section 2472

D Maine Law Title 28-A Section 2081

E Maine Law Title 28-A Section 2501-2520

Your Teen & Alcohol

Citations a Resource Guide for Maine Parents

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- 9 NIAAA, The Effects of Alcohol on Physiological and Biological Development http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/ publications/arh283/125-132.htm.
- 10 Excerpts adapted from "Make a Difference" National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free" by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, Office of National Drug Control Policy. and the "National Survey of American attitudes on Substance Abuse VI: Teens" February 2001 conducted by QEV Analytics and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



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Department of Health and Human Services

Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

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